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**RHODE ISLAND**  
**SYSTEM**  
**OF**  
**Civil and Religious Liberty**



**AND**  
**TREATMENT OF THE INDIANS**  
**1676-1876**

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Bi-centenary of the burning of Providenc



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BI-CENTENARY OF THE BURNING OF PROVIDENCE IN 1676.

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DEFENCE  
OF THE  
RHODE ISLAND SYSTEM  
OF  
*Treatment of the Indians,*  
AND OF  
*Civil and Religious Liberty.*

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
APRIL 10TH, 1876,

BY

ZACHARIAH ALLEN, LL. D.

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## A D D R E S S .

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SUCCESSIVE centuries, as they pass away, serve as epochs of human progress.

They seem like mile stones, reminding travelers on the journey of life to look back on the past for instruction, and forward to the future for improvement.

Two centuries ago this day, our forefathers beheld the heavens reddened by the blaze of their dwellings, kindled by the natives, who had been their friends. We assemble now to consider the causes of this calamity.

Our forefathers,—their joys and their sorrows,—have passed away. It remains for us to trace out and record the history of their lives ; to profit by avoiding their errors, and by copying their virtues.

The question is now vividly brought up, what were the wrongs that converted the once friendly Indians, who so hospitably received and protected the founder and early settlers of Rhode Island, into hostile foes? This bi-centennial celebration is a fit time and occasion to investigate this question, which involves most important principles for human government.

In morals, as in mechanics, every reâction is preceded by an action. What was the action,—what the wrongs, that brought about the hostility of the Indians to the settlers of Rhode Island ;—the burning of Providence, and the war, that finally swept away a once powerful people from the shores

naught in malice." We shall confine our attention to extracts from authentic historical publications, specially relating to the conduct of the original settlers of New England toward the aboriginal inhabitants.

The first notice of the native Indians by the emigrants, who landed in Plymouth, as recorded in Morton's New England Memorial, is an account of the landing of an exploring party. "The party found some fair baskets of corn and beans, which they brought away without paying for."

This act of plunder excited the Indians to defend their property for self-preservation. Consequently, the next exploring party of emigrants "were assailed with arrows by the Indians;" who were ever afterward considered and designated *enemies*. The place was also named "First Encounter."

These statements show that the first act of the newly arrived emigrants at Plymouth was robbery of the Indians, and the first meeting with them a fight.

In consequence of these aggressions, the Indians kept out of sight until the Spring following. Then an Indian named Squanto, in company with another, came into Plymouth. They spoke the English language. As stated by Morton, they were two of eleven Indians, who had been kidnapped by an English captain of a vessel, to be sold as slaves in the West Indies. These two found their way to London, where Fernando Gorges obtained from them the information that originally led to the formation of a Joint Stock Company in London, for obtaining a royal Patent for the possession of the Indian lands, and the fisheries on the New England sea coasts. These interpreters stated that the country west of Plymouth was occupied by a tribe of Indians called Pokano-

kets ;—that “they were intent on revenge for the carrying away of many of their people by the English, without any cause of injury committed.”

In the autumn, nine of the neighboring Sachems came in, and made a treaty of peace, and agreed to become subjects of the King of Great Britain. This compact entitled them to be treated as fellow subjects.

The principal Sachem, named Massasoit, lived about forty miles west of Plymouth ; where the town of Warren now is. This region was called “Massasoit’s country ;” and finally the whole surrounding country was called Massachusetts, after his name. If fame be an offset to wrongs, this old chief is remunerated by affixing his name to one of the present United States of North America.

The Sachem of the powerful tribe of Narragansett Indians, Canonicus, who afterward proved so kind to the exiles in Rhode Island, defying the injustice of the English Colony at Plymouth, expressed his determination of resistance to aggressions, by the diplomatic missive of a bundle of arrows, bound together by the skin of a rattlesnake.

The Plymouth people reciprocated the hostile demonstration by returning the skin filled with gunpowder and bullets. This served as an interchange of visiting cards, as on commencing an acquaintance.

The cupidity of the London Joint Stock Company soon induced them to grant a license to another party of emigrants, under Mr. Weston. They made a settlement at Weymouth. Morton states : The Indians loudly complained of them for stealing their corn, and that they care not for the rule of right. They hired themselves to the Indians and ended in robbing them. Governor Bradford wrote to the Manager of the Weston Colony, warning him against such doings. “Early in Spring, Governor Bradford received information that the exasperated Indians had formed a conspiracy to drive away the base men of the Weston Colony.”

The Governor and Council, instead of checking and pun-

ishing the offenders, declared war against the Indians, and commenced immediate hostilities. It is stated: "'Twas a sad business; for they knew that Weston's men were in the wrong in provoking resistance. Without notifying the Indians of the declaration of war, Miles Standish, the military commander, with four others, inveigled some of the Sachems into a wigwam, sprang suddenly upon them and plunged their knives into the bosoms of the unsuspecting natives." The historian narrates: "The Indians died hard, after receiving many wounds." "Miles Standish returned to Plymouth with the head of Wetenomut, which was set up on a pole in the fort." Their good old minister, Mr. Robinson, rebuked this proceeding in a letter written from Holland, saying: "How happy it would have been, had you converted an Indian before you killed one."

Such a massacre of Sachems, who had signed a treaty of peace, and submitted to become British subjects, is revolting to humanity. A subsequent flagrant injustice in killing the Sachems who had come into Plymouth under a promise of protection, made by Captain Church, during the war with King Philip, manifested a disregard not only of Christian principles, but even of the laws of civilization. This was the general system pursued in settling the shores of the New World. Columbus deemed the planting of the Spanish flag on the sea shore a fee simple title to vast regions of the American continent, and a title to ownership of the owners of the soil as slaves.

To this general practice the French appear not to have so commonly conformed, as they intermarried with the Indians in Canada, while their priests self-denyingly explored the interior as missionaries for converting the Indians to Christianity.

In Rhode Island and Pennsylvania the lands were purchased of the natives, and consequently harmony and good will prevailed.

A recent Massachusetts historian comments on the con-

duct of the Plymouth Pilgrims, by saying: "It is to be regretted that they did not compel Weston's colony to live decently among them, or exterminate them, rather than to have sanctioned their acts, and thereby excited the hatred of the Indians against all Christian white men."\*

The massacre of the Indian sachems near Plymouth inspired such terror, that several of them fled with their families to the swamps and distant forests, where they perished by exposure.†

A few years after this practical execution of the cruel doctrine of the extermination of the heathen, the advent of a missionary of the opposite Christian doctrine of "peace and good will to men," was destined to show the contrast between the two precepts for the practical government of mankind. Roger Williams came to Plymouth soon after, and while officiating as a minister there, extended his missionary labors to the adjacent tribes of Indians. He studied their language to communicate with them kindly and beneficently. In this way he won the friendship of Massasoit, on whom he

\*On meeting the Indians to make a treaty for the purchase of lands for planting, William Penn addressed them as follows:—"Our object is not to destroy, but to do good. We are here met together on the broad pathway of good will, for mutual benefit, so that no advantage shall be taken on either side; as in brotherhood and love."

"I will not compare the friendship now sought to be established, to a chain; for this might be broken. We will esteem the Indians as of the same flesh and blood with the Christians."

The Indians, after a time, appealed to the white men in the following words of one of their chiefs:—"You know that when the white people first came here, they were poor. Now they have our lands and are become rich; and we are poor. What little we received for the land was soon used up; but you have the lands forever." The result was, that a double payment was finally made, and gratefully received by the satisfied natives.

The following law was established by the original proprietors of Pennsylvania:—

"Section XIII. No man shall by any ways or means, by word or deed, affront or wrong any Indian, without suffering the same penalty of the law as if the offence were committed against his fellow planters."

The deeds of transfer of their lands by the Indians in Rhode Island are recorded, with the signatures of the sachems appended in the form of their attested marks of a bow, an arrow, tomahawks and other devices, significant of a sign-manual. It is recorded that, to satisfy the Indians, in some cases, the Providence settlers paid them extra allowances, as stated of the Pennsylvania planters.

†(Winslow.—Chronicles of the Pilgrims.)

was afterward forced to rely for shelter from persecution by the Puritans in and around Boston.

Banished by his fellow countrymen in midwinter, for fourteen weeks he found a home with his friend Massasoit, where, as quaintly narrated by Williams, "he was sorely tossed, and knew not what bread and bed did mean." As truly stated, "he fled from the savage Christians of Massachusetts Bay to the Christian savages of Narragansett Bay."

By carrying out the principles of beneficence and justice to the Indians in the new State he subsequently founded, there never was a "First Encounter" therein with natives, until the adjacent colonies extended their injustice beyond their borders, into the otherwise ever peaceful borders of Rhode Island.

Manifestly this remarkable contrast between the reciprocations of friendly intercourse, and of hostile encounters, is ascribable to the difference between his practice of the beneficent principles of the Christian doctrine of "peace and good will to men," and their practice of those opposite doctrines which, as the Puritans supposed, sanctioned the extermination of people of different religious faiths.

It is certainly one of the most remarkable events recorded in history, that an attempt ever should have been made to introduce and establish a Jewish code and system of combined ecclesiastical and civil laws for the government of mankind in the "new world," the abolishment of which in the Old World, was among the objects of our Saviour's mission upon earth.

The strenuous efforts still persistently continued for maintaining ecclesiastical domination and infallibility by physical force—by combining the powers of church and state, is a very strong proof of the necessity of more thoroughly teaching the true doctrines of Christian humility.

The claim that "the earth is the Lord's and the inheritance of His saints," and that they were the saints, suggested not only the seizure of the lands of the Indians by the Massa-

chusetts Puritans, but also the treating of all non-conformists to their ideas of orthodoxy,—the Baptists, Episcopalians and Quakers,—as having no rights which they were bound to respect.

The same struggle is still going on between dominating ecclesiastics and scientific men. The latter claim the same liberty to study the revelations of the Divine will in the physical laws established for the government of the material world, as ecclesiastical students claim for freely studying the revelations of the same Divine will in the Holy Scriptures, for the government of the intellectual world. “The dark ages” of Europe were the results of the prohibition by ecclesiastics of scientific investigations. Imprisonments, tortures and death were inflicted on innumerable philosophers.

The present discussions about the dubious theories of materialism and evolution would excite little public notice, were they not blended with ecclesiastical controversy. Whether these theories be right or wrong, the privilege of a free discussion of them is justly claimed.

Even manifest physical facts are controverted by metaphysical ecclesiastics. Galileo was imprisoned for affirming that the earth revolves around the sun; and was compelled, before an altar, with bended knee and tearful eyes, to abjure this truth, revealed to those eyes. With these facts before us, we may well believe, that the doctrine taught by Roger Williams was as unwelcome as the fact of science taught by Galileo.

It was the mission of Roger Williams in New England to carry out practically the Christian doctrine of peace and good will to men, not only to the Indians, but to all his fellow men on earth. This he labored to do, and this he successfully accomplished, by founding the first civil government on earth on the basis of a complete separation of church and state, for perfect religious freedom.

The two chief priests of the Puritans in Boston, Mr. Higginson and Mr. Skelton, early established and directed the

course of training in the public schools; and the "New England Primer" continues to exhibit the medley of religious and secular education adapted to their creed.

Under the system of these two ministers, who wielded the supremacy of Moses and Aaron, the government of the Massachusetts Puritans was a religious despotism, under which there was no safety for "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" by the people. As stated by the historian, Elliot, (page 164,) "John Winthrop, with his accustomed pliancy, yielded too much, by assenting to the persecutions of Roger Williams, Mrs. Hutchinson, Mrs. Wheelwright and others. These ministers changed at times from kindly men to bloody persecutors; who imbrued their hands in the blood of the Quakers, and of the poor women accused of witchcraft in Salem." These are the frank words of a Massachusetts historian.

The evils of the Jewish code, carried out by the Puritans of Massachusetts, and the barbarous cruelties practised by them not only toward the Indians, but toward all fellow men of different creeds, by whipping the naked backs of women and hanging them for religious opinions, and by seizing the lands of neighboring people for their inheritance as saints, were so revolting to modern civilization and refinement, that a general shudder was produced in England at the recitals of such conduct; and the interference of kingly power was invoked to put a stop to it. As authentically stated, King Charles, a Catholic at heart, was moved to grant a royal charter to the colonists of Rhode Island, as a place of refuge for Catholics and Protestants alike, against persecutions. By attempting to carry out the Jewish code of union of Church and State, the Indians were practically treated by the Puritans as heathens; and a system of seizing and selling them as slaves, or of exterminating them as *enemies*, was commenced by those who first landed on the shores at Plymouth, as has been narrated. Although the opposite doctrines were taught by Roger Williams, yet so forcibly were



they opposed, that he and the colonists of Rhode Island were involved in the consequences of the injustice of the other white men composing the New England colonies.

It was the struggle for self-preservation against injustice and exterminating cruelty, which excited the peaceful Narragansett Indians to attack their friends in Providence without distinction, as being *the white men*. Assured of the friendship of the Indians, whom he knew personally, Williams crossed the ford of the Moshassic river, where the screw factories now are, and was met by a sachem while advancing up the adjacent bluff. This bluff long retained the name of "Camp-hill," as having been the place of the Indian encampment; and was opposite to the stamping mill for pounding corn; the street leading to which still retains the name of "Stamper street." He was told to go back,—“that he was a good man, and not a hair of his head would be hurt; but it was now too late,—the warriors could be restrained no longer.”

That the Indians had been restrained until their treatment had become unendurable, is officially testified to in a message sent to Gov. Winthrop in Connecticut, by the Legislature of Rhode Island, dated October 26, 1676, and certified at Newport by the Secretary of State, in the following words:

“We believe that if matters come to a just inquiry concerning the cause of the Indian War, that our Narragansett Sachems were subjects to his Majesty, and by his commissioners were taken under his protection, and put under our government. They manifested to us their submission by appearing whenever sent for.”

“Neither was there any manifestation of war against us from them; but always the contrary, until the United Colonies forced them to war, or to such submissions as it seems they could not submit to. The United Colonies, (Plymouth, Massachusetts and Connecticut), thus involved us in these hazards, charges and losses, to our outer Plantations.”

This official document is a verdict of acquittal of the Indians of all blame for the war, one consequence of which was the burning of Providence. When it is considered that this address was written only a few months after that catastrophe, and while smarting under the losses incurred, the truthfulness of this verdict must be admitted as conclusive.

The details of King Philip's war have so recently been recited to you, here in this room, that it is unnecessary to repeat them, even if our limited time permitted. I will read, however, a testimonial of an esteemed American historian, Washington Irving, which exhibits to the world a very different view of the character of King Philip, from that we listened to last summer from the Rev. H. M. Dexter, D. D., at our meeting on the spot at Mount Hope, where Philip was killed. Mr. Dexter, in representing the Puritan side of the question of the treatment of the Indians, summarily characterized the whole life of the sachem as briefly portrayed in the words of Captain Church's description of him, as his body appeared, after being drawn out of the miry swamp: "He was a doleful great naked dirty beast." Irving sketches the life of Metacomet, popularly known as "King Philip," in the following words:

"Persecuted while living, dishonored and slandered when dead, even the accounts published by his enemies exhibit traits of lofty character, sufficient to awaken sympathy for his fate, and respect for his memory."

"We find that amidst all the harassing cares and ferocious passions of constant warfare, he was alive to the kindest feelings of connubial affection and paternal tenderness; and to the exercise of generous sentiments of friendship. The capture of his beloved wife and only son is mentioned with exultation by their captors as causing him poignant misery. The death of each dear friend is triumphantly recorded, as a painful blow on his sensibilities. The final desertion and treachery of many of his followers, in whose affections and faithfulness he had confided, is said to have

‘ desolated his heart, and bereaved him of his last hope and comfort.’ ”

“ He was a patriot, ardently attached to his beautiful native land ;—a Prince true to his subjects, and indignant at their wrongs ; a daring warrior in battle—firm of purpose in adversity, patient of fatigue, of hunger, of bodily suffering, and ready to die in the cause of his country. He displayed the heroic qualities that would have graced a civilized warrior. His bold achievements have rendered him the theme of the poet and historian. He continued a wanderer and a fugitive in his native land ; and finally sunk down like a lonely bark foundering amid darkness and tempest, where there was no pitying eye to weep over his fall, and no friendly hand to record his fate.”

Having briefly glanced at the beneficent principles which produce the most important results in human affairs, we now return to the practical working and carrying out of these principles in the treatment of the natives of New England, verified by records of history.

When the Puritans continued to practice the Jewish code toward the Indians, Roger Williams came forward, not to argue the question of ecclesiastical infallibility, but simply to state the material advantages of just and kindly treatment. In his address to them he uses the following arguments :

“ I never was against the righteous use of the civil sword by men or nations. All desire to consider their wars justifiably defensive. I humbly pray your consideration, whether it be not only possible but preferable, to live and die in peace with the natives of this country.”

“ For are not all the English of this land, generally, a persecuted people,—exiles from their native soil? And hath not the God of peace and Father of mercies made these natives more friendly to us in their country, than our fellow countrymen in our native land? Have they not entered into leagues with us of peace, and to this day continued a peace-

able commerce with us? Are not our families grown up in peace among them?"

"I humbly ask how it can suit with Christian kindness to take hold of some seeming occasions for their destruction, which, though only the chiefs are aimed at, yet all experience tells us, falls on the bodies of the innocent?"

He finally concludes this admirably benevolent letter as follows :

"I cannot learn that the Narragansetts have ever stained their hands with any English blood,—either in open hostilities or secret murders. It is true that they are barbarians ; but their greatest offences against the English have been matters of money, or petty revengings of themselves on other Indians, upon extreme provocations ; but God kept them clear of our blood."

"Many hundreds of English people have experimentally found the Indian people to be inclined to peace and love. Their late famous king, Canonicus, long lived, and died in the same most honorable manner ; and was buried with the same solemnity (in their way), as you laid to sleep your prudent peace-maker, Mr. Winthrop. So did they honor their prudent and peaceable prince. His son, Mexham, inherits his spirit. Yea, through all their towns and countries, how frequently does many a solitary Englishman travel alone with safety and loving kindness."

"Honored sirs, I know it is said the Bay Island Indians are subjects ; but I have heard this questioned ; and, indeed, I question whether any Indians in this country, remaining barbarous and pagan, may with truth and honor be called English subjects."

"All Indians are extremely treacherous, in their own nations, for private ends revolting to strangers. What acts will they commit upon the sound of one defeat of the English? The trade of stealing English cattle and persons, and plunder, will most certainly ensue, if any considerable party escape alive."

“I beseech you not to forget, that although we are apt to play at this plague of war, to seriously consider how wonderfully fickle are the results. Heretofore, not having liberty to enter your jurisdiction to take ship, I was forced to repair unto the Dutch (in New York); where mine eyes did see the first breaking forth of that Indian War, which the Dutch began on the slaughter of some Dutch by the Indians; and which they questioned to finish in a few days. But before we weighed anchor, their boweries were in flames, and both Dutch and English slain. Mine eyes saw the flames of their town, and the flights and hurries of men, women and children, the pressing removal of all they could, for Holland. After vast expense and mutual slaughter of Dutch, English, and Indians, after four years of warfare, the Dutch were forced to make an unworthy and dishonorable peace with the Indians, to save their plantations from ruin.”

“The Narragansetts and Mohawks are the two greatest nations of Indians in this country. They have been confederates, and are both, as yet, friendly and peaceably disposed to the English. I do humbly conceive, in case of unavoidable war with either of them, to make sure of the one as a friend.”

“The Narragansetts have ever continued friendly from the first, and they have been true to you in the Pequot War, and induced the Mohegans to come in. Then ensued the downfall of the Pequots.”

Edward Winslow states in a letter to a friend in England: “We have found the Indians very faithful to their covenants of peace with us, very loving and ready to pleasure us. We go with them, in some cases, fifty miles into the country; and walk as safely and peaceably in the woods, as in the highways of England. We entertain them familiarly in our houses; and they are friendly in bestowing their venison upon us. They are a people without religion; yet very trusty, quick of apprehension, humorous and just.”

Cushman writes: “To us they have been like lambs, so

kind, so trusty and so submissive, that many Christians are not so kind and sincere."

Chicatabot, a sachem visiting Boston in 1631, it is stated: "Being in English clothes, the governor set him at his own table, where he behaved himself as an English gentleman."

The nation of Narragansett Indians occupied the country on the west side of Narragansett bay, which still bears their name, extending northwardly to include the valleys of the rivers Moshassic, Wonasquatucket, Pawtuxet and Pawcatuck, and also all the islands in the bay.

The adjacent tribe of Pequots dwelt on the lands between the Pawcatuck and Thames. The Mohegans occupied the valley of the Niantic river, the Nipmucs the Quinebaug valley and eastwardly.

The east side of Narragansett bay was inhabited by the Wampanoags, (who were next in power to the Narragansetts,) on the broad regions of country extending to Massachusetts Bay, Cape Cod and Nantucket.

The most powerful sachem of the Wampanoags, at the time of the arrival of the Plymouth settlers, was Massasoit, also called Osemequin. His two sons and successors, were Wamsutta, called by the English name of Alexander, and Metacomet, known as King Philip. Canonieus was the first Narragansett sachem known to the English people, and Miantinomo, Pessacus and Canonchet succeeded him.

From Massasoit, Roger Williams obtained permission to occupy the lands in Seekonk, from which he removed across the Blackstone river to the valley of the Moshassic; the purchase of which was made of Miantinomo, including "all the lands and meadows on the two fresh water rivers called the Moshassic and the Pawtuxet rivers."

The conflicting claims of Massasoit and Miantinomo to some part of these tracts were satisfactorily settled for by the Providence colonists.

In a letter to Major Mason, Roger Williams gives an impressive statement of his services to the colonies of Massachusetts and Plymouth, in regard to the Indians, as follows:

“In accordance with letters received from the Governor and Council of Boston, requesting me to use my utmost and speediest endeavors to break and hinder the league labored for by the Pequots and the Mohegans against the English, the Lord helped me immediately to take my life in my hand, and scarcely acquainting my wife, to ship myself all alone in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind and great seas, every minute in hazard of my life, to the sachem's home.”

“Three days and nights my mission forced me to lodge and mix with the bloody Pequot ambassadors; whose hands, methought, reeked with the blood of countrymen massacred on Connecticut river. I could not but nightly look for their bloody knives at my own throat likewise.”

“God wondrously preserved me, and helped me to defeat the Pequot's negotiation and designs, and to promote and finish, by many travels and charges, the English league with the Narragansetts and Mohegans against the Pequots. When the English forces marched through the Narragansett country, against the Pequots, I gladly entertained at my house in Providence, General Stoughton and his officers.”

The Pequot war, to which Williams refers in the preceding statement, was another case of the reckless injustice of the Massachusetts colonists.

It appears that a trader named Oldham, was found killed in his boat at Block Island, and “probably deserved it,” as a writer states in describing the event, and as the following account, copied from Morton's *New England Memorial*, renders probable.

“John Oldham was a man of unruly passions, beyond the limits of reason. All reproof of him was like adding oil to fire. After much trouble with him, he was finally put under a guard of musketeers, with orders to punish him by every one giving him a blow on the hinder part with the butt end of their muskets, and by then sending him in a boat with these farewell words: ‘Go, and mend your manners.’”

After his expulsion from Plymouth, it appears that this licentious man went in his boat to Block Island in the year 1636, where he did not "mend his manners;" and the Indians, in turn, bade him farewell, with "a blow of a hatchet on his head," which finally put an end to his evil doings.

It appears that Captain John Gallup, commanding a small vessel of twenty tons, in sailing near Block Island in 1636, met a pinnace containing several Indians, who suspiciously bore away. He gave chase, and endeavored to run the pinnace down by directing the bow of his vessel against its frail side. Captain Gallup with one man and two boys then began to assail the Indians from guns loaded with duck shot, and from pistols. This caused the Indians to jump overboard into the sea, and then the pinnace was taken possession of by Captain Gallup. On searching the boat, the body of John Oldham was found under an old seine, with his head cleft by a hatchet. He threw the body into the sea, stripped the pinnace of the goods and sails, and left it adrift.

This was certainly a very bold and summary way of despatching twelve Indians, as stated by Captain Gallup, on suspicion of something wrong and before realizing it.

These facts were communicated to the governor of Massachusetts; who made representation to Miantinomo of the occurrence. He sent seventeen canoes with men to discover the offenders; and to obtain the two boys who were with Oldham. He endeavored to prevail on the Pequots to make retribution, as he had successfully done two years before in the case of killing Captain Stone, a similar trader on the coast of Connecticut.

The governor and council of Massachusetts decided that punishment should be inflicted; not for any regard for Oldham, but as an example. John Endicott was sent with ninety volunteers, under orders to put to death all the Indians found on the island. The Indians having escaped from the island,



Endicott proceeded to burn their wigwams. But he did not stop here, and probably transcended his orders by pursuing the Indians to the shore on the mainland; where he began to kill all the people he could find, and to destroy their towns. This rash procedure at once involved the Connecticut colony in an Indian war, without their consent, or any notice from the Massachusetts colony. Governor Winthrop, of Connecticut, remonstrated against this conduct of Endicott; and the commander of the fort at Saybrook severely condemned the act. The governor of Plymouth also remonstrated against it as "needlessly provoking a war."

Captain Church states in his history of Philip's war, that a similar sudden aggression was made by the Plymouth people, by commencing hostilities with the tribe of Indians near Dartmouth. "About eight score (160) of the Indians surrendered under the promise that if they would come in, they should be fairly treated. Without any regard to the promise made to them on their surrendering themselves, they were carried to Plymouth, and sold as slaves to be transported out of the country." Captain Church states: "This action was so hateful, that I opposed it, to the loss of the good will and respect of some that were previously my best friends." Church says: "Had their promise to the Indians been fairly kept, it is probable that most, if not all the Indians in these parts would have followed the example of those who came in; which would have been a good step toward finishing the war."

Endicott's ruthless invasion led the Pequots to send ambassadors to Miantinomo and make a common cause and exterminate the English. They commenced immediately killing the English settlers in Connecticut. Consternation, sufferings and losses for a time desolated the new colony.

The war was now begun in earnest, and no other course was left than to raise a force to subdue the Pequots. An expedition of 116 men was sent from Hartford, May 26, 1637; which succeeded in capturing the Pequot fort, and

destroying about 300 men, women and children, and capturing nearly as many more. Miantinomo aided the English.

Winthrop states: "It was a fearful destruction and extermination of an old nation." He adds: "Fifteen of the boys and two of the girls were sent to Massachusetts, and from thence shipped by the rulers to the island of New Providence, to be sold as slaves."

"The extermination of an old nation," the reduction of some to slavery, the destruction of many lives, and the desolation of the colony of Connecticut, appear by the preceding statements to have been caused by the rash conduct of a few reckless men.

The impulsive character of Governor Endicott was first manifested by his cutting the red cross from the British flag at Salem; for which he was temporarily deposed by the influence of the ministers Higginson and Skelton; who preferred to uphold this emblematic union of church and state. His passionate temper is recorded in his apologetic letter to Governor Winthrop for assaulting "good man Dexter"; for which offence the pugnacious Endicott was fined forty shillings:

"SIR: I acknowledge I was too rash in striking him; after I found that it is not lawful for a Justice of the Peace to strike. But if you had seen the manner of his carriage, with such daring of me, with his arms in kimbow, it would have provoked a very patient man."

"And further, he hath given out, that if I had a purse, he would make me empty it; and if he cannot have justice here, he would do wonders in England; and if he cannot prevail there, he will try it out with me here at blows. If it was lawful to try it out with blows, and he a fit person for me to deal with, you should not hear me complain."

The writer of a Review of Palfrey's History of New England comments on this letter as "a curious exemplification of the struggle of 'the old Adam' and the Puritan spirit."

It may excite a smile to read the confession of his having been too rash in striking good man Dexter, after ascertaining by a fine of forty shillings that "it is not lawful for a Justice of the Peace to strike." But it is sad to find by historical records, that into the hands of a man of such ungovernable temper and hasty action, was consigned the execution of both the ecclesiastical and civil decrees of the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts. The merciless conduct of this violent man, in the trials and executions of the Quakers, is recorded by the historian Sewell, as follows :

"John Endicott, seeing the division of the jury, and their hesitation to bring in a verdict against the prisoner, Wenlock Christison, exclaimed : ' I could find in my heart to go home,' at the same time throwing something furiously on the table. Then Wenlock said : ' It were better for thee to be at home than here, about this bloody work.'

"Then Governor Endicott stood up and said : ' You that will not convict, record it. I thank God I am not afraid to give judgment.' And seeing them still backward to vote, he took silence for consent ; and precipitately pronounced judgment ; and ordered him to listen to his sentence of death by hanging, until he was dead, dead, dead."

Mr. Sewell states that the execution of the Quakeress, Mrs. Dyer, was urged on by Gov. Endicott.

Mr. George E. Ellis describes his refusal to show her mercy, in his published address before the Lowell Institute, in the following words :

"I have before me as I write, the sorrowful autograph letter of the husband of Mary Dyer, addressed to Gov. Endicott, by 'his most humble suppliant, W. Dyer, dated Portsmouth, R. I., May 3d, 1669 :'

"HONORED SIR. My supplications to yourself and the Honorable Assembly of the General Court, is to beg affectionately the life of my dear wife."

"I cannot tell how she was moved by her spirit again to

run so great a hazard to herself, and trouble to me and her children, and to all her friends and well wishers. So it is, that from Shelter Island, Narragansett, she secretly and speedily journeyed to your jurisdiction. Unhappy journey, may I say, and occasion of grief and trouble to those that desire to remain quiet, by hazarding life for an object, I know not to what end or purpose."

"If her zeal be so great as thus to adventure, oh, let your pity surmount it, and spare her life. Let not your compassion be conquered by her inconsiderate madness,—but conquering; to the spread of your renowne."

"You are sensible of my condition; oh, let Mercy's wings once more soar above Justice's balance, and I will exalt your goodness all my life; which otherwise will be languishing in sorrow:—yea, so great, that I would rather suffer the blow of death at once."

"I will forbear to trouble your Honors' with words, which cannot express my feelings and distress. Yourselves may be husbands to wives; I am one to a most dearly beloved. O do not deprive me of her; I pray you to save her to me: and I shall be so much obliged to you, that thanks will be ever uttered to render your mercy and honor renowned."

"Pity me: I beg it with tears."

Mr. Ellis concludes with these words: "The record of these tears are still on the paper which I have before me while I write; a sadly stained autograph."

The execution of the Sachem Miantinomo, to which we shall have occasion to revert, bears no comparison in merciless cruelty to the execution of Mary Dyer, after such an appeal to the sympathies of humanity.

It is historically instructive to learn how the character of a whole people is stamped by the leading and determining influence of a few headstrong and unyielding men. To John Endicott, more than to any other political leader, under the dictation of the Puritan ministers in Boston, appears

to be due the violent proceedings that finally aroused the attention and re-action, which resulted in the legal establishment of religious freedom in Rhode Island, as indispensably necessary for preventing a recurrence of such evils.

These few brief historical statements show that the fate of a nation depends on the conduct of a few leaders, who may precipitately involve the gentle and the just in the commission of and responsibility for wrong doings. It appears that the most intelligent and just men of the Massachusetts Colony, timorously submitted to an inquisitional church tyranny, originating and exercised in night meetings of the brothers and sisters of congregations, under the direction of intriguing ministers, and thus prepared to be legally carried out by day light in a legislative assembly and jury of church members.

Under such a system, it is not surprising that good men like Winthrop, Saltonstall, Winslow, Bradford and others, should have shrunk back from open opposition to such an organized control of religious and civil power, enforced even by domestic female influences. An inadvertent word or act at any time might seriously involve the best person in difficulties of church discipline, and in a trial before zealous interpreters of a Jewish code of laws. Imprisonments, boring the tongue with hot irons, cutting off the ears, banishment into the surrounding wilderness, then occupied only by Indians, and death on a gallows, were all held up in bold relief to terrify every one into ready submission to the will of the ruling ecclesiastics.\*

The wonderful credulity involved in the Puritan acceptance of the popular superstitions of that age unsettled the established belief in the material and natural laws of the uni-

\*It appears that in executing the decree of banishment of the Quakeresses, the penalty was added, of whipping their naked backs with ten lashes, in each successive town, while tied on the cart, in which they were transported to the border of the Colony. The present town of Dedham appears to have been the legal frontier of the Christian civilization, blessed with exhibiting the benign spectacle of the naked backs of women, bleeding under the lashes of an executioner.

verse. It was deemed as sacrilegious to disbelieve the existence of witches, as for Galileo to disbelieve that the sun revolved around the earth.

The testimony of children from ten to fifteen years of age was considered by Cotton Mather and other ministers in Salem, sufficient proof to hang nineteen old women and one man on "Gallows Hill," in Salem. There was no safety for life or liberty; they were condemned without reference to the legal proofs required in courts of civil laws. History states that women were stripped naked, and subjected to examination by experts, to discover "Devil's teats"; and even pimples and flea bites were subjects of examination and discussion. To avoid such public trials, nearly an hundred terror stricken persons, on being accused, confessed themselves to be witches.

The popular common sense was finally aroused for self protection, to put a stop to these terrific ecclesiastical proceedings.

After the excitement was over, the accusers came out publicly to acknowledge their deceptions. It is stated "the boys in the street hooted after the reverend Cotton Mather, and threw stones at him."

Even the respected Winthrop, in common with others, is recorded to have been imbued with superstitious ideas; as appears by his statement that "In his son's room was a book containing the Greek Testament, Psalms and 'the Common Prayer,' (Episcopal,) out of which the mice ate every leaf of the *Common Prayer*, but none of the other parts of the book."\*

There was no chance of reformation of this ecclesiastical domination, until it produced a popular revolt, by becoming too intolerable to be endured; for only one-third of the men, (none but church members,) as stated by Judge Story, were qualified to vote.

\*Elliott's History, page 414 and 416. The publication of such a singular statement apparently leads to the inference that mice instinctively knew the difference between *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*.

The predominance of the ecclesiastical over the civil power is strikingly illustrated in the trial and condemnation to death of the Sachem Miantinomo, in Boston.

This Narragansett chief rendered himself very obnoxious to the other colonists by his kindness and concessions of land to the exiled Rhode Island colony. Being beyond their charter limits, there was no way of reaching him except by the pretence of fears of hostility, when the law of self-preservation might warrant a forcible seizure of his territory. The border settlers in Connecticut coveted the beautiful shores of Narragansett Bay, and an adjacent Sachem, Uncas, desired the downfall of a rival chief, and the division of a portion of the spoils with the border settlers: while Massachusetts actually seized lands at Pawtuxet, which place, Winthrop said, "was likely to be of use as an outlet to Narragansett Bay."

The colonists of Rhode Island, who were the most exposed to Indian hostilities, had no fears of, but on the contrary, the kindest intercourse with the Narragansetts.

The seizure of the Indian lands, is rebuked by Roger Williams, as follows:

"In the sight of God, you will find the question at bottom to be, First—a depraved appetite after the great vanities, dreams and shadows of this vanishing life,—the acquisitions of great portions of land in this wilderness; as if men were in a great necessity and danger for want of great portions of land, like the poor, thirsty and hungry seamen, on a long, starving passage. This is one of the gods of New England; for which the Most High will punish the transgressors."

"Secondly—An unneighborly and unchristian intrusion upon us, as being the weaker, although contrary to your laws, as well as ours, concerning the purchase of lands, I refused all their proffers of shares in lands, and even to interpret for them with the sachems."

The title to the territory between the Thames and the Pawcatuck rivers, appears to have been investigated by a

Committee appointed by the Commissioners of the United Colonies in 1663 ; who made the following report : \*

"Five Sachems, occupying the lands near Norwich, being brothers, grew so great and proud, that while on a hunting expedition, they quarrelled with the Pequots living eastwardly ; at which the great Pequot Sachem made war upon them, and conquered their country. Then they fled to the Narragansetts, leaving their country and people to the conqueror."

"Therefore the Indians affirm, that all their lands, including Uncas' lands, according to their customs and manners, were Pequot lands, as being by them conquered ; and now are the true right of the English, who have conquered the Pequots."

"The father of Uncas having married into the royal Pequot family, acquired by this alliance a right to a certain tract of land on the west side of Pequot river, since known as Mohegan proper." †

The following notice of the character of Uncas explains his subserviency in carrying out the designs of the Puritan Colonists :

"Uncas was exceedingly restless and ambitious. Five times, the Indians say, he rebelled against his superiors, and was defeated by Sassacus. Then he retired to the territory near the present town of Windsor. This brought him into proximity with the English settlers at Hartford, and to an acquaintance with Captain Mason, by whom he was employed, with seventy Mohegans, in the extermination of Sassacus and the Pequot nation, in May, 1637. He was thenceforth protected and fostered by the English, who conceded to him large tracts of land, and also many captives taken by them.

\* Conn. Colonial Records, 3; 479.

† In the excellent history of Norwich, Connecticut, written by Frances M. Caulkins, are contained several notices of the Indians who once occupied the region where Uncas lived, which have not been previously published. From this work the reader may obtain interesting information of the tribes of Indians who lived on the present Eastern borders of Connecticut, adjacent to the Narragansett country.



He thereby became powerful, and, in the words of other Indians, 'the English made him high.'

"The Narragansetts and Mohegans were rival tribes; Norwich was then the Mohegan frontier, the battle ground and lurking place of the hostile tribes."

These two powerful tribes were annoying to the frontier settlers at Hartford and New Haven; and as their lands were coveted by them, it was manifestly for their interest to allow a war between these tribes, that they might weaken each other.

To prevent these two tribes from making warlike preparations, which might suddenly be turned against the adjacent colonies, Miantinomo and Uncas were prevailed upon by the English to agree—"not to make war upon one another without first notifying the English."

This agreement was in favor of the security of the Connecticut frontier colonists against the Narragansetts. An easy acquiescence, if not encouragement, was given to Uncas to assail the Narragansetts.

He first attempted to excite the fears of the English settlers in Connecticut and Massachusetts, by reports of the plotting of the Narragansetts and Mohawks. He next affirmed that the Narragansett chief had employed an Indian to assassinate him, as a reason for hostilities. "Of this, however, no proof was adduced."

"Miantinomo indignantly denied this charge and showed that Uncas cut his arm with a flint, and then accused him of employing an Indian to attempt to kill him."

Still, the apprehensions of the colonists were not entirely removed. Rumors of a coalition between the various Indian tribes, looking to a general insurrection, floated in the air.

On alleged fears of hostility from the Narragansetts, the Massachusetts rulers sent for Miantinomo to come to Boston and exculpate himself.

"He obeyed the summons, and appeared before the Commissioners of the four Colonies; and demanded that his accusers should meet him, face to face.

"He said he was willing to meet Uncas in Boston, or to go and settle with him elsewhere. He then put his hand into that of the Governor, with an expression of honesty, that was satisfactory."

"But Miantinomo went back indignant at the treatment he received as a culprit, and at the refusal to him of a seat."

"Much dissatisfaction had been excited by taking away the fire arms from the Pokonoket Indians, who had bought and paid for them."

Conscious of the injustice and numerous wrongs done to the Indians, the Puritan colonists anticipated resistance to such continued aggressions, and were in constant expectation of some sudden outbreak. "A man could not halloo at night, without exciting a general alarm of an onslaught of the Indians;" as stated by Elliott.

How surely "conscience doth make cowards of us all."

The attempt to convict Miantinomo of hostile intentions or actions against the English having failed, Uncas next appears to have been encouraged, by the support of the frontier settlers, to act aggressively against the Narragansetts, and provoke Miantinomo to commence a war.

Accordingly he assailed a kinsman of Miantinomo, Sequasson, living within the present borders of Connecticut, and killed several of his people. The Narragansett chief gave notice to the governor of Massachusetts of these wrongs and the necessity for resistance.

It appears that the governor assented to the proposal of Miantinomo to settle the affront he had received from Uncas, "elsewhere" than in Boston. It would be profitable any way, to have the tribes weaken each other.

In 1643, hostilities were commenced between the adjacent Sachem Uncas, and the border Narragansett Indians. Miantinomo invaded the territory of Uncas. The crafty Mohegan proposed a conference for a private settlement of the difficulty, while the hostile tribes were arrayed against each other; and when Miantinomo went out to meet him,

with no suspicions of treachery, the Mohegan warriors suddenly sprang forward, and seized him, aided by two of Miantinomo's men; and succeeded in bearing him off as a captive. To cover up the treachery, Uncas killed the two traitors on the spot; for "Dead men tell no tales."

The haughty chief stood silent before his captors, until asked by Uncas, "Do you beg for life?" then he replied, "Kill me; I fear not."

But well knowing the desire of the united colonists to dispose of the Narragansett chief advantageously both to themselves and to himself, Uncas carried the prisoner to Hartford to be disposed of as the colonial rulers saw fit.

The rulers in Hartford, having no cause of complaint against the Narragansett chief, "advised that the whole affair should be referred to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, at their meeting," as there was no law for keeping him a prisoner. In this way the Commissioners of the four Colonies obtained possession of Miantinomo as a prisoner of war; and they assembled in Boston, on the 16th of September, 1643, to dispose of him.

The Commissioners having no criminal allegations against the captive, reported a decision, "that nothing worthy of death had been done by Miantinomo, but it might not be safe to set him free."

Then they turned him over to be dealt with by the tender mercies of a convocation of numerous ministers, who happened to be then assembled in Boston; to be disposed of under some of their constructions of the Jewish code of laws.

The Commissioners thus shifted all legal responsibility from themselves upon the chief priests of the colony in Boston, precisely as the Roman governor, Pilate, shifted his legal responsibility upon the chief priests in Jerusalem. A similar speedy response of a sentence of death was returned from the chief priests in Boston.

They also justified their sentence of death in the same

way, by saying "they had a law, whereby he was worthy of death;" quoting the Jewish precedents in slaying Agag and others.

Accordingly the clerical decree, endorsed by the Commissioners, was sent to the custodians in Hartford, to deliver over Miantinomo to Uncas to be killed.

To see that the bloody work was duly executed, two white men were sent with Uncas, with special directions to kill Miantinomo beyond their precincts.

The account of the death of this chieftain, as given in Winthrop's Journal, states:—"Taking Miantinomo along with them, on the way between Hartford and Windsor, where the people of Uncas dwelt, the brother of Uncas followed after Miantinomo, and clove his head with a hatchet."

As suggested in the History of Norwich: "The Commissioners probably had in view Uncas' domain, adjacent to Hartford, when they made their decree, directing Uncas to—'carry the captive into the next part of your own government, and there put him to death.'—Accordingly the locality of the execution of the Narragansett Sachem must have been somewhere between East Hartford and Windsor; and there, in an unknown grave, his remains rest beneath the forest shades."

The brutality of the barbarous agent, Uncas, is narrated by Trumbull, the historian, who states: "Uncas cut a piece of flesh from the shoulder of the captive, and ate it in savage triumph."

The place of capture is still known as Sachem's Plains, near Norwich; and an adjacent spring as Sachem's Spring.

It is narrated that the Mohegans made a pile of stones on the spot, like a cairn on ancient battle fields. "Every Indian passing by added a stone to the pile; the Mohegans with a shout of triumph, and the Narragansetts with a moan of lamentation."

"In the course of agricultural improvements the cairn gradually disappeared. But on the 4th of July, 1841, a

granite monument was erected on the spot, principally through the influence and exertions of William C. Gilman, Esq., aided by citizens of Norwich. It is made of a block of granite five feet square at the base, placed on a pedestal. It bears the simple inscription :

## M I A N T I N O M O .

1643.

In a hostile land a monument has been reared magnanimously to this chief; but on his native shores no monumental inscription, as yet, records his name.

After having been instrumental in exciting Uncas to destroy the Narragansett chief, the Colonial Commissioners felt bound to protect their agent from the vengeance of the Narragansetts, and accordingly they furnished a body guard of fifteen men for his safety, as the Colonial Records testify.

When a Narragansett army invaded the territory of Uncas in 1644, and drove him into a strong fort built for him by the English, and besieged him therein, Connecticut colonists rallied to aid him. Uncas liberally paid them for their services by signing title deeds to Pequot lands. Trumbull says : " Mr. Leffingwell received from Uncas a conveyance of nearly the whole town of Norwich for his services." Indeed, some of the English served as mercenary soldiers under the brutal Indian chief, and received their pay in lands.

On several occasions the Narragansetts would have punished Uncas for his treachery, but were opposed by the surrounding settlers, whom they would not attack, and abandoned their expeditions in despair.

This fact is referred to in the history of Norwich as follows : " Through all the long-continued contests of the Narragansetts with Uncas, the English of Connecticut, though ostensibly neutral, always protected Uncas."

The character of this man, so useful an ally to the Connecticut settlers,\* is depicted in a few words by General Gookins and the Rev. Asa Fitch: "Uncas, an old and willfully wicked man,—a drunkard, and every way vicious, hath always been an opposer and despiser of God."

What an impressive contrast is this character of Uncas to that of Canonicus and Miantinomo, given by Roger Williams, as previously described!

The list of crimes of the agent who killed Miantinomo fills two pages of the history of Connecticut.

In commenting on the execution of Miantinomo, an able Massachusetts historian, Judge Savage, sadly avows:—"I regret to acknowledge the belief is forced upon me, that Miantinomo was condemned because he favored Gorton and his heterodox associates by the sale of his lands at Shawomet and Pawtuxet."

Elliott's New England History refers to the execution of Miantinomo, as—"a wicked, wanton and cruel deed, unsustained by any excuse. It was specially advised by a committee of five ministers, and sanctioned by some of the leading and best rulers, such as Winthrop, Winslow, Fenwick and Eaton."

The gentle historian of Norwich yields to impulses of justice and humanity, in the following expressions:—

"The sentence of Miantinomo is one of the most flagrant acts of injustice recorded against the English settlers. He had shown many acts of kindness to the whites, and evinced a noble and magnanimous spirit in receiving into the bosom of his country, Mason and his little band of soldiers from Hartford; and greatly assisted them in the conquest of the Pequots."

"I would gladly come to a different conclusion," says Mr. Hollister, in his history of Connecticut, "and joyfully admit the extenuation of excited fears, of false testimonies, and blinding prejudices; but never to justify this deed."

In extenuation of the sentence of death passed on the

Narragansett Chief, an apologist for the conduct of the Massachusetts Puritans, Reverend J. G. Palfrey, says :—

“The advice of the five ministers of religion to put Miantinomo to death, has been thought to add a painful feature to this case. But if this act had not been approved by Christian ministers, it should not have been done at all. The ministers were the guardians of the fold against all wolves. They were not dumb dogs.”

Thus was put to death a faithful, noble-hearted Indian chief, respected and beloved by the Rhode Island people for his many kindnesses to them, and for sterling virtues, that would have adorned the ruler of a Christian nation.

But goodness and virtue in human character are not sunk and lost in the dust of an obscure grave beneath a dark forest shade, or beneath the ocean waves, where the material body disappears. How unexpectedly is this illustrated in the case of this unjustly sacrificed Narragansett chief;—for as if by an unaccountable impulse, our Great Republic has been moved to honor the name of “MIANTINOMO,” by affixing it to their grandest war steamer; which was sent forth for exhibition in Europe, as the proudest specimen of American art and power. This served to spread the glory of the old chief’s name throughout the world.

To be remembered and honored in after ages is the object of human ambition. All history shows that the practice of the beneficent Christian precept, of “Peace and good will to men,” is the surest means to accomplish this object, even by the patient endurance of wrongs, and by returning good for evil; for

“The sweet remembrance of the just  
Shall flourish when they sleep in dust.”

As graphically portrayed by an estimable Connecticut poetess, Mrs L. H. Sigourney, the red men will never be forgotten, while so many of our States, bays, lakes and rivers, are indelibly stamped with their names:—

“Ye say they all have passed away,  
That ancient race and brave;  
—That their light canoes have vanished  
From off the crested wave:  
—That 'mid the forests, where they roamed,  
There rings no hunter's shout.  
—But their names are on your waters,  
Ye may not wash them out:

Their memory lingers on your hills,  
Their baptism on your shore;  
Your everlasting rivers speak  
Their dialect of yore.  
Old Massachusetts wears it,  
Within her lordly crown,  
And broad Ohio bears it,  
Mid all her young renown.

Connecticut hath wreathed it  
Where her quiet foliage waves,  
And bold Kentucky breathed it,  
Through all her ancient caves.  
Monadnoc, on his forehead hoar,  
Upholds the sacred trust;  
The mountains are their monuments,  
Though ye destroy their dust.

Think ye the Eternal's ear is dull,  
His sleepless vision dim?  
Think ye He'll fail in justice full,  
To the wronged who call on Him?”













